

RECENT FIELDWORK AT THE MCKENDRY SITE, SILVER CREEK, WESTERN NEW YORK STATE

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The McKendry site is an open-air, multi-component site located on Beebe Road in the town of Silver Creek, New York, a short distance inland from Lake Erie (Figure 1). In 1989, John McKendry purchased the property as a place for archaeological excavations by the Beau Fleuve Chapter. This fieldwork was performed with the help of Eric Hansen, M.A., R.P.A. and Dr. Richard Michael Gramly. One of the salient discoveries during these initial investigations was a ceramic, blocked-end, tubular pipe (Figure 2) that lay on the bottom of a basket-lined storage pit. A radiocarbon date of circa. 300 B.C. was obtained from charred basketry within that pit (see Hansen and McKendry 1991).

In 2007 McKendry asked the Department of Anthropology, University at Buffalo (State University of New York at Buffalo) to put him in touch with a graduate student who would be interested in supervising excavations at his site (Kate Whalen). The following is a summary of recent fieldwork at the McKendry site under her direction with the assistance of people who are associated with the University at Buffalo. These excavations focused upon finding evidence of prehistoric occupation and re-assembling information that was accumulated in the course of previous investigations. Through

a combination of methodologies – surface survey, ground-penetrating radar (GPR), and excavating – the site's complex, multi-component nature is explored.

Recent Excavations

One of the objectives of this phase of excavations was to determine the location of past excavation units. The position of the base line had been lost to some degree, making it difficult to re-locate the previously explored areas. Another objective was to estimate the extent of cultural deposits that remained for exploration. It was important to determine the limits of the site within the property parcel.

Work during 2007 was limited to two 1 X 1 m test units adjacent to a pre-existing open trench. These units (TU 1 and TU 2) were located at the eastern end of the trench, with TU 1 being north of TU 2.

The 2008 field season began with a surface survey of the site. A new base line was established, and it was set to trend east-west (80 degrees east of north) along the southern portion of the property originating at an utility pole at its western edge. Three areas were prepared for inspection, namely, Area 1 (the southernmost section of the property parcel below a topographic rise), Area 2 (at the northern edge of the

natural levels because of a thin soil A-horizon).

During the 2009 field season there were two GPR surveys. One of them was conducted by an advanced geophysics class led by Dr. Hu, while, the other was performed by Robert Dean, M.A., R.P.A. of the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Seneca Nation. Also during 2009 twelve additional test units were dug. Five of them (#s 22-26) were located on the lower side of the slope on the eastern edge of the property; the remainder were sited within the densest concentration of artifacts as revealed during the 2008 surface survey. The A-horizon within this block of seven test units was significantly thicker than elsewhere and can be correlated with the greater density of artifacts.

Degree of Site Preservation

The archaeological site has been preserved to some degree within the parcel; however, testing by Panamerican Consultants Incorporated (PCI) revealed stratigraphic disturbances near Beebe Road. (Note: The disturbances identified by PCI pertain to the right-of-way of a water main and have not affected the areas of the site considered in this report.) Cultural stratigraphy within the plow zone has been destroyed by historic and modern (mechanized) plowing. Below the plow zone, however, preservation is good, and many features have been identified (Figures 8 and 9, for example). The soil at this site is very sandy and well-drained, which is the cause of some taphonomic degradation.

Beginning with Hansen and McKendry's 1991 report, 35 features have been identified. They range in age from Early Archaic to late Historic. Dating of these features has been done using both associated artifacts and radiocarbon determinations (on charcoal).

Reference

Hansen, Eric and John McKendry
1991 The McKendry site: A multi-component, stratified site in Chautauque County, New York. *Ohio Archaeologist* 41(4).

Note: This manuscript was re-formatted by R. M. Gramly during November, 2011. Certain minor additions were made to the original text.

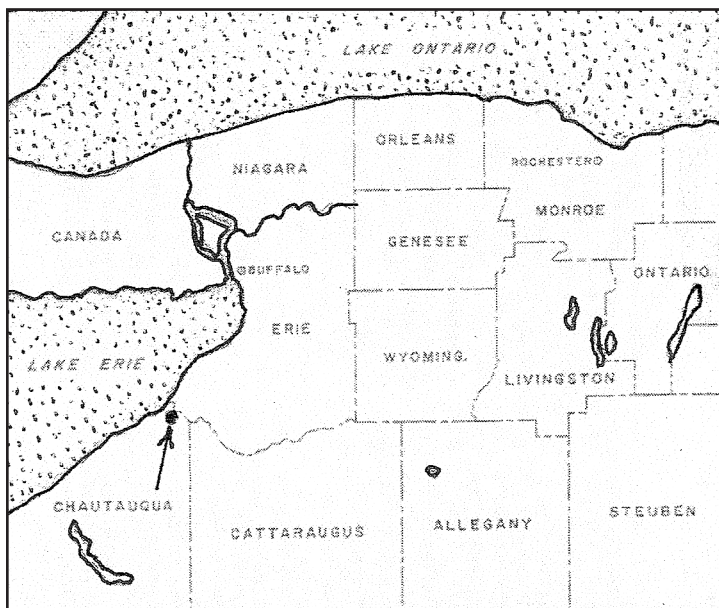


Figure 1 (Whalen/McKendry) Location of the McKendry site (arrow) in the town of Silver Creek, Chautauque County, New York.



Figure 2 (Whalen/McKendry) Views of a ceramic, tubular pipe dated 300 B.C. from a storage pit at the McKendry site. Note the narrowed end of the pipe. The bore end was partially blocked by a baked clay "marble" that was found still in its original position. Length of pipe = 13 cm (approx 5 inches).

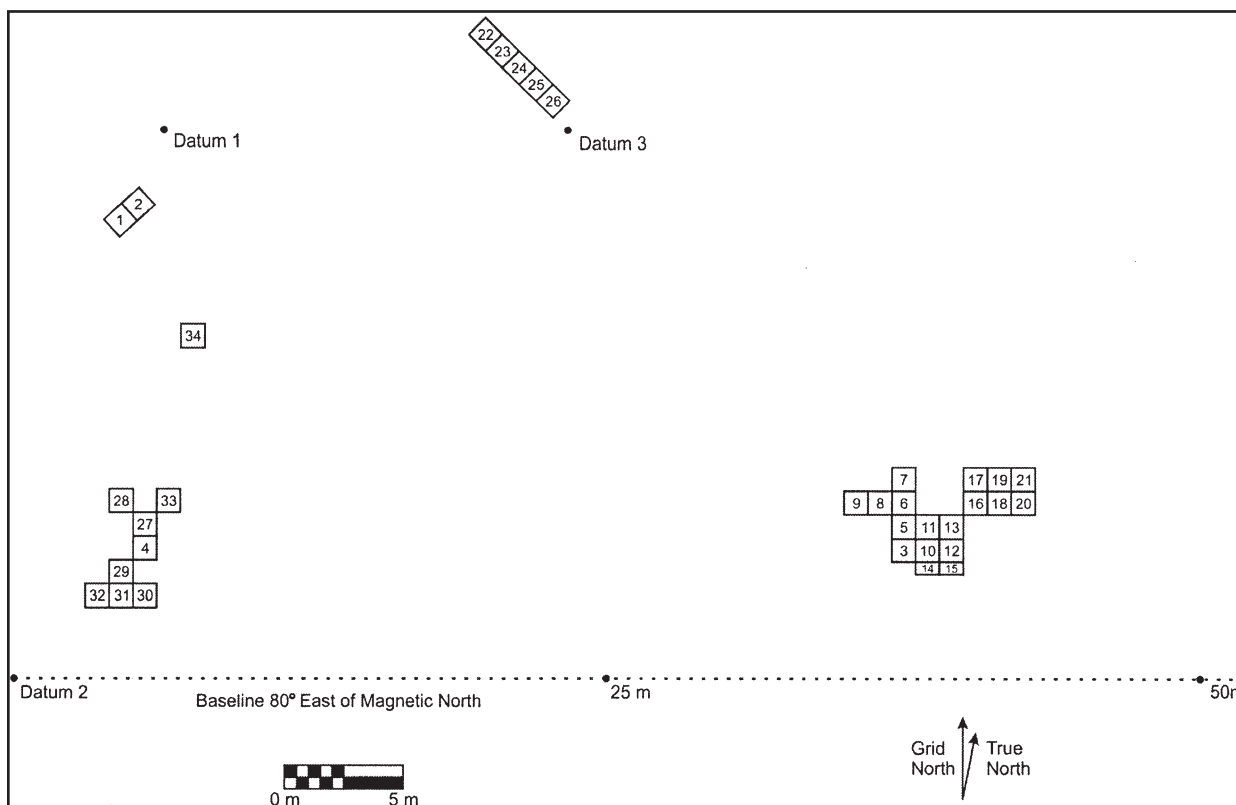


Figure 3 (Whalen/McKendry) Project map from the 2007-2009 field seasons.



Figure 4 (Whalen/McKendry) Plowed surface prepared for a survey, Area 1.



Figure 5 (Whalen/McKendry) Plowed surface prepared for a survey, Area 2.



Figure 6 (Whalen/McKendry) Plowed surface prepared for a survey, Area 3. In the background may be seen the eastern edge of Area 1.



Figure 7 (Whalen/McKendry) Flagged artifacts during surface collecting of Area 1. The photograph was taken from the utility pole (at new base line) looking northeast.



Figure 8 (Whalen/McKendry) Cross-sectioned pit feature, McKendry site. August 1992.



Figure 9 (Whalen/McKendry) Feature freshly exposed during September, 2010 fieldwork at the McKendry site.